

RE: Localism Meeting in San Antonio, Texas 1/28/04

There is a lot of concern about the way broadcasters handle captioning. The following comments will concern captioning during weather segments, live reports, emergency broadcasts and other general captioning problems.

Weather Segments/Live Reports

The weather segments of many news channels are almost never captioned. Channel 9 in San Antonio does show captioning for the weather but very sporadically does it not. Other channels almost never have captions. It's rather frustrating because of the kind of erratic weather we have had throughout the nation.

In addition to the weather segments, live news is a problem. If there has been a crime reported and they go live to the site, we are clueless about where it happened or if someone is still 'at large.' To me, that poses a safety problem because if a deaf/hard of hearing person lives in the area and there is a chase in progress, there is a great potential for problems because that person may not be aware of this in order to be more alert.

Banner Announcements

By banner announcements, I am talking about when they reduce the viewing screen to run a banner at the bottom with election results or adding banners to existing screen with emergency weather. These banners cut off the captioning and we no longer can watch, or I should say follow, a program because of this. Sometimes if the caption is not cut off, it continues over the banner rather than on top the screen like it is supposed to and we would miss critical information (weather or Amber alerts).

Emergency Broadcasts

Emergency weather shots – these are almost never captioned and unfortunately some of us do not read maps well to know what they are talking about. If there are tornado sightings, we do not know because captioning is not available. This also includes the interruption style news alerts.

General Captioning Problem

Often shows that have captioning will cut off the captions during the last 5 minutes of the show and it seems that it slows down to cue in the news brief. These news briefs that introduce the upcoming news segment are almost never captioned or if it is, it is delayed by about 30 words and never finishes by the time that brief is complete and gone to commercial. I am not aware if this is a local issue or if it's a network (programming) issue, but it can be rather irritating.

Thank you for your time.

J. Grisham